PUBLICATIONS

American Political Science Review Editorial Report: Executive Summary (Fall 2022)

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Editor's note: This report is adapted from the full report presented to the *APSR* Editorial Board in October 2022. The full report is available online at https://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/journals/APSR%202022%20Editorial%20Report%2010.1.22.pdf?ver=J-DV-UVzgKu5Ec1xu9W4pnA%3d%3d.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *American Political Science Review* is the flagship journal of the American Political Science Association. The current editorial team began their editorship of the journal on June 1, 2020. We have worked to maintain and improve the quality and integrity of the *American Political Science Review*, while broadening its readership, relevance, and contributor pool, and expanding its commitment to research ethics. We plan to continue expanding these efforts.

- We have sought to expand our readership through our social media strategies, which include tweeting and publishing blog posts with published authors. These efforts have paid off, as is evident in the major jump in Journal Impact Factor (JIF) that we experienced since our team took over (from 4.183 in 2019 to 8.048 in 2021). We quadrupled our Altmetric social media scores within one year. These measures are only one way of evaluating success, but they nevertheless speak to the viability of our social media strategies.
- We have substantially increased our Open Access articles so that almost half of our pieces published in the most recent issue were available through Open Access.
- Our submissions have overall increased since our team started; however, in the past year the journal experienced a dip in submissions from 1,651 in 2020-21 to 1,467 in 2021-22, which we attribute to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also to the increase that often occurs in the first year when a team begins its tenure.
- Our overall acceptance rate stands at 5.9%.
- The percentage of desk rejects stands at 42%, and the percentage of papers rejected after peer review stands at 45.2%.
- We have reduced the median days from submission to first invitation for peer review from 13 (prior team) to 10; from submission to reject after peer review from 84 (prior team) to 70; and from submission to invitation to revise after peer review from 129 (prior team) to 87. Our median days from submission to desk reject stands at 10, which is longer than the 6 days of the prior team, due to our policy of requiring at least two editors to sign off on a desk reject.
- Our team is committed to using the entire page allocation of the journal. In the first volume entirely managed by our team, we published 1,520 pages or 102 manuscripts of research content, which is nearly double that of recent editorial teams.
- Looking at the proportion of accepted articles using specific methodological approaches, we see that the biggest increases came in the proportion of articles that employ qualitative case studies, critical or post-structuralist approaches, and ethnography, which is consistent with our vision for the journal.
- Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, we note an increase in solo female, female team, and mixed team submissions. We note a healthy increase in submissions for solo scholars of color, teams of scholars of color, and teams with at least one member identifying as a scholar of color.

THE TEAM

Our editorial team is made up of 12 women with broad past editorial experience, methodological expertise, and a background in every subfield of the discipline. Our team is also diverse along the lines of class background, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, and several of us bring research expertise in these areas to the table.

On our team, every editor is an equal member. There is no single "lead" editor, and no one person defines the journal's direction. We have designated two co-Lead Editors who oversee the smooth running of the journal and ensure that no manuscripts fall through the cracks. One of these co-Leads changes every six months. Our overlapping terms ensure continuity, while bringing fresh energy and new eyes to the lead position every six months.

Our Editorial Board of 111 distinguished scholars includes some who served on the Editorial Board for the prior team and many new members.

SUBMISSIONS, EDITORIAL DECISIONS, AND OTHER DATA

OVERVIEW OF SUBMISSIONS DATA

APSR's submissions had been trending upward until 2020-21

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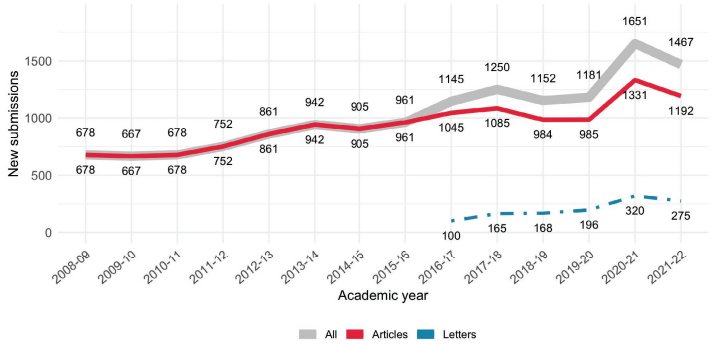
and then they declined somewhat in 2021-22 (Figure 1). Manuscript submissions increased significantly in our team's first year by 470 manuscripts. They then dropped by 184 submissions the following year. We attribute this to Covid and the toll it took on our contributors. The proportion of manuscripts submitted as letters, a format introduced in 2016, has substantially increased from 168 in 2018-19 to 320 in 2020-21, and we expect that to continue when data from the last months of 2022 become available.

Figure 1. New article and letter submissions, 2008-2022 academic years



Note: AY2019-20 = 07/01/2019-05/31/2020 (11 months). Starting AY2020-21, AY runs June 1-May 31. Includes all new submissions, 06/01/2020-07/31/2022. Source: @APSRjournal (2022).

TURNAROUND TIMES

Our turnaround times are comparable to or better than those of prior teams (Table 1).

Table 1. Submissions, Decisions, and Turnaround Times

Indicator	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
Median days from submission to first invitation for peer review	18	7	13	10
Median days from submission to desk reject	14	4	6	10
Median days from submission to reject after peer review	81	62	84	70
Median days from submission to invitation to revise after peer review	132	92	129	87

Figures 2-5 plot the distribution of turnaround days for new manuscripts.

Figure 2. Days from initial submission to under review

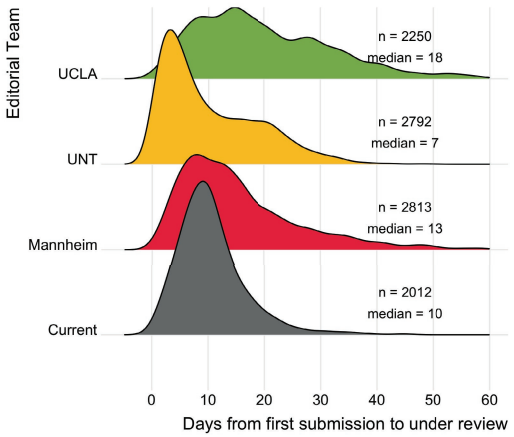


Figure 3. Days from initial submission to desk reject

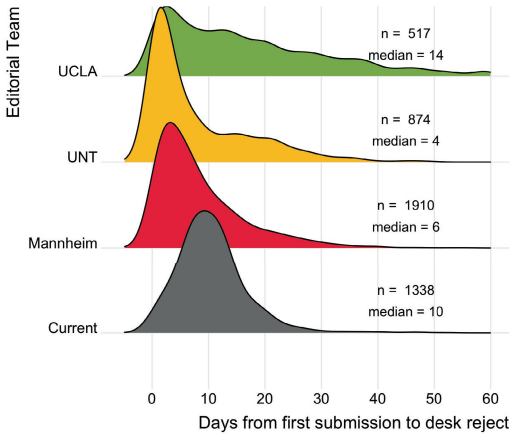


Figure 4. Days from initial submission to reject after peer review

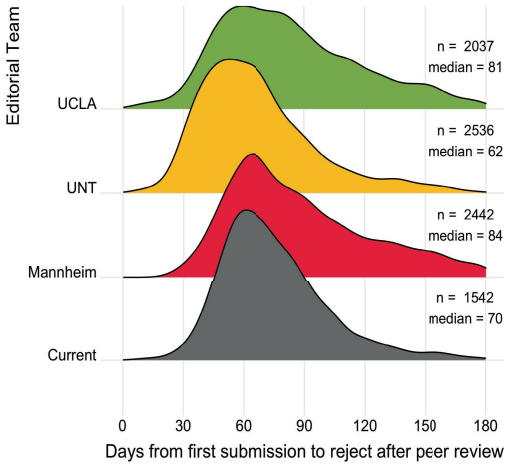
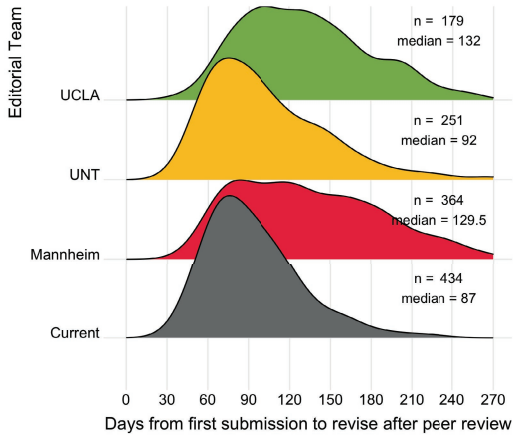


Figure 5. Days from initial submission to revise after peer review



SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS AND DECISIONS

Our editorial team's overall rate of desk rejection parallels the prior team's rate. We have so far desk rejected 42% of submissions, a rate slightly higher than that of the prior team's rate (40.5% of manuscripts). Like the Mannheim team, we have invited peer reviewers to provide feedback on about 59% of new submissions. Our team is inviting, on average, one more review-

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er per manuscript (6.2 vs. 5.1) than the previous team, which is consistent with our lower completion rate (47.4% vs. 56.9%).

Table 2: Reviewers, All New Manuscripts with initial decisions, 2008-2022*

*July 1, 2008 – July 31, 2022

	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
Mean reviewers invited per manuscript	5.2	6.3	5.1	6.2
Mean reviews completed per manuscript	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.9
Percent of total invited that are completed	51.8%	48.0%	56.9%	47.9%

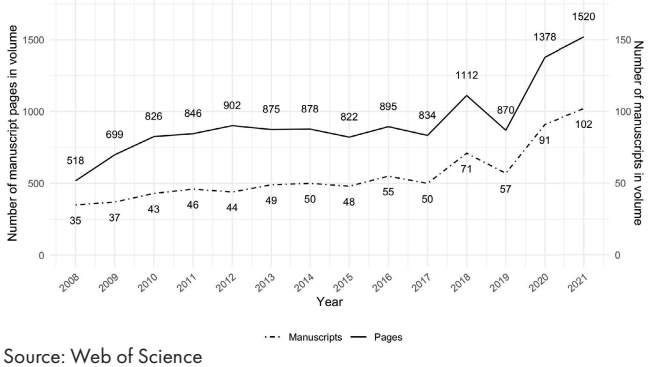
The mean number of revisions for manuscripts with final accept status is 2.95. After review, our acceptance rate is 55%, and after revision it is 87%. Thus, we have an acceptance rate of 74% if a new submission received an initial invitation to revise and resubmit by our team (even if originally submitted prior to our tenure).

Our team's overall final acceptance rate for all submissions that both were initially submitted to and have a final decision by our team is 5.9%. We note that calculating annual acceptance rates can be fraught because in any given year, some accepted manuscripts were initially submitted several years earlier, and many new submissions may not have a final decision until a subsequent year.

OVERALL NUMBER OF PAGES AND MANUSCRIPTS

Our team committed to using the entire page allocation of the journal. Figure 6 gives a tally of the number of articles and letters published every year since 2008. In 2021, the first volume entirely managed by our team, we published 1,520 pages or 102 manuscripts of research content, which is nearly double that of recent editorial teams. Considered together, the relative increase in both submissions and published content suggest that we are making gains toward our team's stated goals of increasing submissions and acceptances, while only modestly increasing the overall acceptance rate. This is also consistent with our commitment to continue publishing the same types of research typically associated with the *APSR* while expanding the journal's remit to embrace greater substantive and methodological diversity.

Figure 6. Number of pages and manuscripts in each volume of *APSR*



Source: Web of Science

SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTANCES BY SUBFIELD AND METHOD

Table 3: New submissions by Subfield and Editorial Team, 2008-2022*

Subfield	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
American Government & Politics	636 (22.9%)	725 (19.8%)	888 (18.8%)	673 (20.1%)
Comparative Politics	769 (27.7%)	1142 (31.1%)	1434 (30.3%)	1006 (30.0%)
Formal Theory	193 (7.0%)	183 (5.0%)	264 (5.6%)	125 (3.7%)
International Relations	460 (16.6%)	616 (16.8%)	675 (14.3%)	477 (14.2%)
Methodology	96 (3.5%)	111 (3.0%)	197 (4.2%)	139 (4.1%)
Normative Political Theory	448 (16.1%)	565 (15.4%)	683 (14.4%)	476 (14.2%)
Race, Ethnicity, & Politics	91 (3.3%)	140 (3.8%)	179 (3.8%)	194 (5.8%)
Other	82 (3.0%)	187 (5.1%)	408 (8.6%)	263 (7.8%)
Total	2775 (100.0%)	3669 (100.0%)	4728 (100.0%)	3353 (100.0%)

Note: These categorizations are chosen by the corresponding author at the time of submission.
*July 1, 2008-July 31, 2022

The proportion of accepted articles that focus on Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, 5.9%, is the largest reported by the four most recent teams. The proportion of accepted manuscripts in International Relations have returned to levels comparable to that of the pre-Mannheim team. While the number of acceptances in formal theory and methodology in our first two years are comparable (or suggest growth in the number of acceptances) to the overall numbers for the most recent team, as a proportion of overall acceptances, the rate is lower.

Table 4: Accepted manuscripts by EM Section and Editorial Team making final decision

	UCLA	UNT	Mannheim	Current
American	28 (22.4%)	38 (17.6%)	55 (20.4%)	60 (22.7%)
Comparative Politics	43 (34.4%)	80 (37.0%)	101 (37.5%)	95 (36.0%)
Formal Theory	11 (8.8%)	5 (2.3%)	28 (10.4%)	10 (3.8%)
International Relations	12 (9.6%)	24 (11.1%)	16 (5.9%)	28 (10.6%)
Methodology	2 (1.6%)	8 (3.7%)	12 (4.5%)	8 (3.0%)
Normative Political Theory	25 (20.0%)	56 (25.9%)	40 (14.9%)	40 (15.2%)
Race, Ethnicity, & Politics	2 (1.6%)	4 (1.9%)	9 (3.3%)	17 (6.4%)
Other	2 (1.6%)	1 (0.5%)	8 (3.0%)	6 (2.3%)
Total	125 (100.0%)	216 (100.0%)	269 (100.0%)	264 (100.0%)

Note: These categorizations are chosen by the corresponding author at the time of submission. New submissions are classified by receiving team. Acceptances are classified by final decision team. *July 1, 2008 – July 31, 2022

PRIMARY METHODOLOGY ACCORDING TO CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Table 5: New submissions by method and editorial team

Methodology	Mannheim	Current*
Case study/Small N	151 (5.0%)	175 (5.4%)
Critical Theory/Poststructuralist	45 (1.5%)	67 (2.1%)
Ethnographic	15 (0.5%)	18 (0.6%)
Experimental (lab, survey, or field)	476 (15.8%)	606 (18.9%)
Formal	261 (8.7%)	185 (5.8%)
Interpretive	234 (7.8%)	246 (7.7%)
Normative	240 (8.0%)	284 (8.8%)
Statistical-Observational	1595 (52.9%)	1633 (50.8%)
Total	3017 (100.0%)	3214 (100.0%)

Note: These categorizations are chosen by the corresponding author using submission questionnaire approved by APSA Council, January 2018. Only includes 2.5 years of Mannheim team tenure.*As of July 31, 2022

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Looking at the proportion of accepted articles using specific approaches (Table 6), we see that the biggest increases came in the proportion of articles that employed qualitative case studies, critical or poststructuralist approaches, and ethnography, which is consistent with our vision for the journal. While there were some modest decreases in the relative proportions of accepted articles using formal modeling and statistical analyses, the raw numbers of accepted manuscripts in these categories remained large.

Table 6: Accepted Manuscripts by Methodology and Editorial Team Making Final Decision

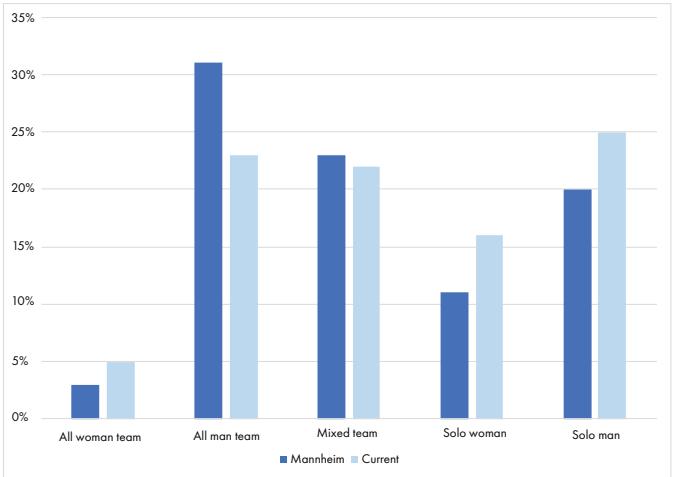
Methodology	Mannheim	Current
Case study/Small N	2 (1.0%)	12 (4.6%)
Critical Theory/Poststructuralist	0 (0.0%)	6 (2.3%)
Ethnographic	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.8%)
Experimental (lab, survey, or field)	36 (18.3%)	50 (19.2%)
Formal	24 (12.2%)	12 (4.6%)
Interpretive	12 (6.1%)	23 (8.8%)
Normative	10 (5.1%)	16 (6.2%)
Statistical-Observational	113 (57.4%)	139 (53.5%)
Total	197 (100.0%)	260 (100.0%)

Note: These categorizations are chosen by the corresponding author using submission questionnaire approved by APSA Council, January 2018. Only includes 2.5 years of Mannheim team tenure. *As of July 31, 2022

DEMOGRAPHICS: AUTHORS

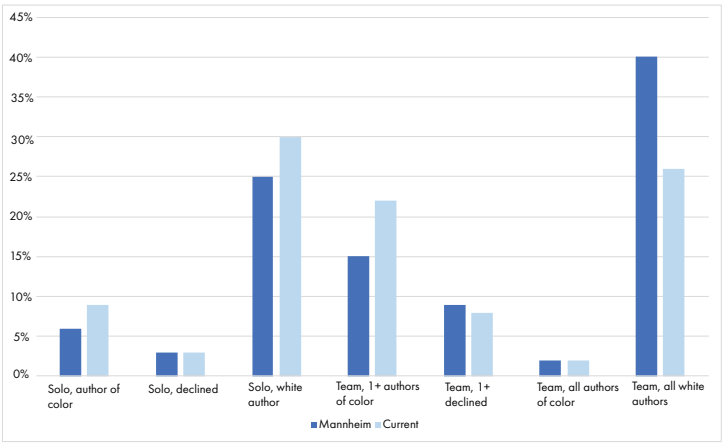
Comparing our team with the Mannheim team, we note a healthy increase in submissions for solo scholars of color, teams of scholars of color, and teams with at least one member identifying as a scholar of color.

Figure 7: New submissions by gender (%)*



Note: Excludes submissions before January 1, 2018, when submission questionnaire was implemented.
*As of July 31, 2022

Figure 8: New submissions by race and ethnicity (%)*



Note: Excludes submissions before January 1, 2018, when submission questionnaire was implemented.
*As of July 31, 2022

CITATIONS

A journal's impact factor (JIF) is the average number of citations in a given year to an article published in the last two years. It is calculated by dividing the number of citations to all articles in the two-year window by the total number of articles published in that period. The 2021 impact factor for *APSR* is 8.048. This means that on average, an article appearing in the journal in 2019 or 2020 was cited about 8 times in 2021. In 2021, Web of Science began including articles published online prior to their print publication (e.g., First View at Cambridge University Press) in the JIF calculations. This score punctuates an upward climb since 2016, and the *APSR*'s IF is now higher compared to several peers that publish research for a general political science audience (see Figure 9). This places the *APSR* among the top four research outlets in political science ranked by Web of Science.

The Journal Citation index (JCI) is a relatively new measure of the Web of Science, designed to anchor a journal's score to comparisons with other journals in the same field. It also normalizes by type of publication and year of publication and uses a window for both the citable papers and the citing papers. Users interpret a journal's score against a normalized score of 1, which would mean that a journal's published pieces received citations equal to the average citations for papers of that type in that year in journals in that field. The *APSR*'s 2021 JCI is 3.49, meaning that a paper published in the journal in the 2018-2020 period received 3.49 more citations from publications in this period than did parallel papers. We can also report that the *APSR*'s JCI has been rising since 2017, when it was at 2.65, although in 2020 it was slightly higher at 3.57. It should be noted that the JCI measure largely captures manuscripts published or processed before our team took over in June 2020.

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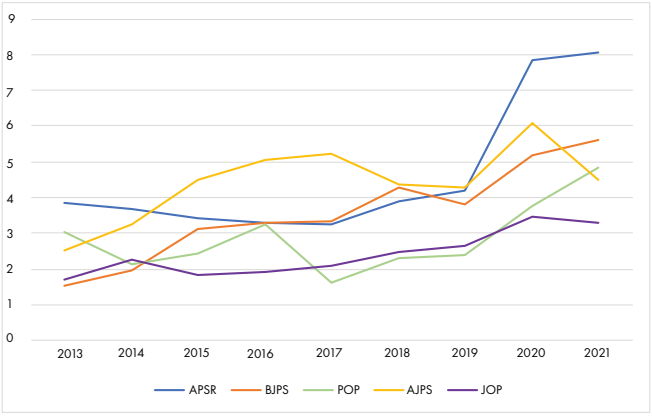
Figure 9. Journal Impact Factor, 2016-2022



Source: Cambridge University Press, OOR https://ooir.org/journals.php?category=polisci

American Political Science Review, British Journal of Political Science, Perspectives on Politics, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics.

Much, if not most, of the credit for the *APSR*'s current impact metrics goes to previous teams' steadfast stewardships. We also attribute some to the current team's social media presence, which helps drive traffic to the journal's present and past publications.

CONCLUSION

Based on our first two and a half years of stewarding the *APSR*, we can say that we have met or exceeded most of our goals. We have developed and implemented policies that aim to promote the principles we articulated in our initial proposal to serve as editors: editorial transparency; editorial checks and balances; a commitment to research ethics; substantive, methodological, and representational diversity; active engagement with the APSA membership; and modernizing the journal's communications. We have increased the visibility of the journal through our social media outreach. All these strategies resulted in significant journal impact factor and Altmetric increases. We have also managed to maintain reasonable turnaround times for authors despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic.

We continue to monitor our submissions and will be redoubling our efforts to ensure that political scientists submit their best work to the *APSR*. As a cohesive, collaborative, and effective team, we are excited about what we have accomplished, even as we recognize that we still have far to go. ■

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